

How Far?

BY C. H. BALSBAUGH.

The "original wheat" is not only of Christ's sowing, but is Christ. "The children of the kingdom" are "the good seed," and the kingdom is one of Truth, and the Truth is Christ. Matt. 13:38, John 18:36, 37, and 14:6; or, to go back to the radix, the "original wheat" is the Eternal Word Incarnate sowing Truth with life and lip among the children of men.

To expurgate from the Bible the doctrine that "the man Christ Jesus" is very God, will not leave a syllable. "The testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy." Rev. 19:10. "Search the Scriptures: they testify of me." John 5:39. "All the scriptures" are full of Jesus. Luke 24:27, 44. O, the sweet monotony—Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, forever and forever, and yet with infinite variation. He is the complete alphabet of God, spelling every word the Bible contains, verbally and by implication. His own mouth has spoken the all-inclusive claim—"I am Alpha and Omega, first and last, beginning and end." He is the eternal Logos, the "God said" of the universe. Logos and Deity, Deity and Humanity, Humanity and Christianity, are inseparable. God is not personally progressive, but his evolution is. No new thought or purpose was ever known to Him. Without the Logos no God, without the same no Christian. "In Him was life," all life. "In the beginning was the Word"—not began to be. "I am" is the triune God's self-chosen appellation of His eternal Being. No one would venture to assert that there is a spark or throb of life in the universe unclaimed by God. The worm and midge live by him no less than Gabriel. The devil is not self-originated. His Maker owns him. As all life is God's, so its uses are also his down to the minutest particulars. Not in fact but in the divine intent. This is the Bible idea of being, and the ground and principle of the Incarnation. Defection from this central truth is the essence of sin. The movement of a finger or a muscle contrary to this eternal and immutable law is the birth of apostasy. Only a little forbidden fruit the test of human weal or woe. Can so much depend on so simple an act? The first man was a God-man, an embryo Christ. Body, soul, and spirit were God-made and God-owned. Not even so much independent self-hood as biting into a forbidden apple was allowable. Adam and Eve did one simple act with God's life apart from God's use, and lo, what direful consequences! Will the Christian point out what the Christian may do outside the uses God assigns the life he gives us? Have we any model besides the incarnation? Do his own pre-natal types teach anything different? Do they not all proclaim divine life in man for divine ends? One exception mars the whole. Was there a single function or action in the organic or voluntary life of Jesus that had no connection with his divine generation? Was not the life of God blended with his humanity as organically and indissolubly as the life of Joseph would have been had he been the father? This is the mystery and value of the Incarnation. This is to be born again. No generation will fit us for the presence and fellowship of God but by Himself, on the principle of his infleshing in Emmanuel. God and humanity are close akin. Sin has not only ruined us, but obliterated the true conception of ourselves. "The God of this world has blinded the eyes of those that believe not." "To open our eyes," Christ the Logos of the Trinity, personally filled out the image of himself in man. If we, as Christians have any lower conception of ourselves than shrines of divinity, we wrong ourselves and depreciate Emmanuel. The felt and confessed disparity between the ideal and the actual should sadden and humble us, and sedulously should we guard against the natural proneness to accommodate the ideal to our own littleness. Carnal license enters a very general and seductive plea against the rigors of God incarnate.

"Looking unto Jesus." How far? In what? Is there an exception in any corner of our personality or any expression of our being? God has not one life for himself and another for man. "I and the Father are one." He was God and man in Christ, and one life served for both. Not by blood, or will of the flesh, or will of man, but of God. Blood, flesh and will are of God, but allowed no uses in Christ or Christians, but in accordance to the eternal law of the divine nature. Rom. 8:2. "We are not our own." "body and spirit" are for the divine glory. 1 Cor. 6:19, 20. The mind and

spirit of Christ are to be the all of the life and conduct of the God-born. He lived, labored, wept, ate, drank, dressed, suffered, died, rose and lives to-day as Godman. This is the divine ideal of humanity. This is to be taught all nations, preached to every creature. To realize it is salvation. Cut, form, texture, color, about which so much is said, has nothing to do with our fundamental conception, and further than the radical fact itself determines them. God is omniscient and consistent. He has given no symbols that grow not out of the verities they represent. All life is self-determinative according to the law of God present in all the activities. The Incarnation ditto. How far does this reach? The life of Jesus is the answer. Who is more than God-eyed enough to designate the allowable point of departure from this law? Let us not lower the Incarnation so as to find room to lower ourselves. "Because I live, ye shall live also." This is both ground and individual duplication. "I live." Is this absolute or not? If not, where is the plan in Emmanuel? If it is, where is the margin for us? Here is the straight gate, and this is why so few are saved. We are not half strict enough with ourselves. The Adamic life is ever seeking the supremacy, even in religion. Nine-tenths of Christendom know not who Christ is, or what it means to have "the life hid with Christ in God." Reason-faith is not heart-faith. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness." The heart is the womb of the new creature. There we are dead in sin, and there we must die to sin. Dead, dead, dead, says Paul, as the absolute antecedent and condition of the new life. What a mistake that the popular religion favors such easy and fatal self-deception in the matter. If we die we live not again out of our own resources. This death and revivification is not a figure. The resurrection is with and by Christ. He took up the very life he laid down. Not we. His death and rising was a step onward. Ours is a step in the opposite direction. It is called "newness of life." Whose and what life? His who gives it. In part only or in its totality? Does this include dress and shoe-latchet? Why John's sense of unworthiness to unloose the God-man's shoe-tie? Because it was on the foot of God incarnate. That sandal and latchet had as vital a connection with the wearer as his skin, but not in the same way. This seems "amusing and sad" to some, to the majority. Dress of all colors and shapes represents life. To say it represents nothing is nonsense. There is not a thing in the universe that does stand for a fact deeper than itself except God. If we are dead we are dead, and the life that follows is surely the ground of all the activities that follow. If Christ is that life as the scripture affirms, shall not the total outcome be the product of his in-being? This is Christianity as exemplified by Emmanuel; and Head and members are ruled by one soul. "To me to live is Christ." No capitals are large enough to emphasize according to intrinsic import. It is so important and solemn! Our eternal destiny is pivoted here. Nothing will serve as a substitute. God incarnate or eternal damnation: this is the only alternative. God in Christ, God in man, God in every believer—this is the Gospel. Our ideal was Christ's actual, and our climax is to sit with him in his throne, which is simply the normal condition of human life. "The high-calling of God in Christ Jesus" is his own perfection and beatitude. Thoughts like these force me to look with pity and a sacred contempt on the ado made over issues that touch not the core of the divine infleshing. "To press toward the mark" is to be in Christ and have him for inspiration no less than for God.

There is nothing beneath or behind the divine Incarnation. It is not an expedient, but an eternal purpose. Eph. 3:11. Its manifestation in time was not its beginning. The dozen Theophanies of the old Testament were its adumbrations. "Before Abraham was I am. The Lord Jesus means Jehovah Jesus. Iahveh is the root name of God, expressive of his unbeginning existence. Christ appropriates it again and again. The Logos was not only with God but was God. What he did on earth, and is doing now by the economy of the Cross, was an intent coeval with his being; unless we think God less than omniscient, and capable of change. He is schooling the principalities and powers of heaven by his manifold wisdom displayed for and in the church. Eph. 3:10. Oh, what a mission is ours, and how shamefully we neglect and abuse it! While the eldersons of light in the upper world desire to look into the mysteries of redemption, and are engaged in countless legions, for its advancement, we are biting and devouring each other, thus showing that the Adamic and not the God-life is dominating us. Nothing will sober and sanctify and unify us but God manifest in the flesh, in every one of us. This will make our "idiosyncracies" helps and harmonies instead of the mirth and sadness. We will not disdain "the truth as it is in Jesus," because it reaches us through a unique channel. We will have blood

washed mantles that will cover a multitude of sins without abetting any. We will "know no man after the flesh," ourselves least of all, and will "know nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified." This is brotherhood, salvation, eternal life.

Paul Acknowledges His Errors.

BY D. BAILEY.

We all have need to acknowledge our errors. We have all been prodigals and spent much of our Father's resources in riotous living. Our God-given intellects have been prostituted to the service of Satan.

The past is gone forever, the wrong we have done we can never undo, the good we might have accomplished was done by other hands or else was never done at all, and our only hope is to do what we can in our Master's service now. We can do nothing more than our present duty. Sufficient unto the day is the labor thereof. We can never make up lost time in the Lord's work, except it be by humble submission to his will in every particular. The most faithful servant of God can but do his whole duty, he can do no more, and it is very dangerous to be satisfied to rest with less.

The first obstruction which I see in the way of our success, in our reconciliation with God, is a want of humility. A decided confidence in our own worthiness, will lead us to make excuses for our sins.

Paul might have made excuses for persecuting the Christians. He did say that he thought he was doing God service, but calls himself the "chief of sinners." So it may be that we would not give a recital of our own misdeeds, we may "keep back part of the price" to be paid for our ransom, and think that as we have never done much out of the way we may continue along in about the same way. Alas! the mistake may be fatal. I think we have reason to doubt the conversion of those who do not feel their utter sinfulness and degradation.

Another sign of true conversion is zeal in the service of the Master, nor does the true convert seek a high place in which to work. Paul, no doubt, would have been pleased to preach to the proud Pharisees at Jerusalem, but it was not to be so, and he went submissively to the accursed Gentiles. Look at the change. The proud, free-born Roman citizen, the superstitious Pharisee, in training as a teacher of the Jewish law, turning his back on all, and making himself a servant of the Nazarine to carry the news to the dogs of Greece. Let me cite a parallel case. Suppose a young man of the South twenty-five years ago, one of the upper ten, with slaves to do his every bidding, an eloquent young man and one training himself in the law, with the view of entering the Senate. Such a one, being converted would, no doubt, feel that he should be allowed to preach to his friends, but, to be like Paul, he must renounce all and preach to the slaves, the equals of those from whom he was accustomed to receive service. But he would work. The truly converted man cannot keep still. Think of Paul with the great story of what the Lord had done for him. What greater punishment could there be than to enjoin silence upon him, not allow him to tell it to any one. Then you can see how it is that the Christian does not wait for a choice of work, but "Does with his might what his hands find to do." It does not show a Christian spirit to leave the Lord out of the question when we are choosing our work, and some consult, their ease, their pride, their avarice, or their ambition, and when they have made their choice they ask God to bless the work. This is the reason we have so many men out of place in the world and that the Lord's work is so often neglected or poorly done.

Let us all acknowledge our sins and ask the Lord to guide our feet in the right paths while we faithfully work for him.

Heaven and earth and all the elements obey and minister to the hands which are often lifted up to Heaven in earnest prayer. Yea, all works, and which is yet more and greater, all the words of God obey it.—Leighton.